

## **From "Pluralistic National Identification" to "Geopolitical Liminality"**

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### **Abstract**

From a MA work started in 1992 to my last publications of 2015, I have tried over the last twenty years to link together three topics in which I've been particularly interested: Taiwan's identity (and more generally, domestic) politics, Taiwan's history (and historiographical debates) and cross-strait (and more generally China-Taiwan-US) geopolitics. These topics are undeniably intertwined together. These three important dimensions however are key to understand the debates on Taiwan's identity, status, belonging and future. Through papers and books on the Mainlanders, the nation's boundaries, history textbooks, national identity issues, or Taiwan's geopolitics history, I have little by little tried to frame a composite understanding of the nature of Taiwan's identity politics and the island's very specific relations to China. From the concept of « pluralistic national identification » to the one of « Taiwan's geopolitical liminality », I have tried to understand what is Taiwan, why Taiwan matters, how to define the legitimacy of its study, and to help decipher the nature of cross-straits relations as they have been progressively been built since the early 17th century in a complex geopolitical frame showing all its complexity today. This presentation will give a brief outline of the journey that drove me from studying the political legitimization of the ROC between 1949 and 1972 to enquiring into a possible « cross-historical geopolitical comparison » of the Taiwan strait in the 17th century and today.